30 SATURDAY EVENING POST

November 20, 1948

Pers. Robinson, Donald

They Fight the Cold War Under Cover

By DONALD ROBINSON

Here's the story of what our new cloak-and-dagger outfit, the Central Intelligence Agency, is doing to keep our secrets—and learn the secrets of other nations. It comes from those who serve in the little-known organization.

WIDE WORLD

Director of the new outfit. Rear Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter avoids hiring "gumshoe artists."

LATE last spring, Lt. Col. J. D. Tassoyev, Soviet Guards Officer, was the central figure in a melodrama of international intrigue that rocketed onto the front page of almost every newspaper from Moscow to San Francisco. At the time, there were two versions to the incident.

Tass, the official U. S. S. R. news agency, charged that Tassoyev was kidnaped from Bremen to London, imprisoned and tortured by the British Secret Service in an effort to make him abandon his country's service.

Only because "a scandal was brewing," Tass said, did the British Government ultimately release the colonel to Soviet authorities.

"The gentleman was here in England of his own free will," countered the British Foreign Office. "He left because he was asked to leave."

The American intelligence officers could fill in the missing chunks of both stories. They could tell a tale of spy and counterspy that would sound like a movie thriller. It would be a valuable account, too, for it would prove that, despite blundering at high levels and abrasive frictions between agencies of our own Government, the United States at last has the makings of an effective intelligence system.

Here is the story the United States intelligence officers could tell. It comes from official United States Government sources.

Colonel Tassoyev approached American agents in Bremen last April with an offer to desert the Soviet Army. According to the report sent Washington, the colonel spoke at length about his hatred of communism, his yearning for democracy. He hinted that he had a large stock of secrets to divulge.

Such an offer was nothing new to the United States intelligence men. Scores of Red Army men, including at least one Russian lieutenant general, have recently run out on Stalin. Many have given valuable information. But the American agents told Washington that they were not impressed with Tassoyev. There was something phony about him. In their radioed report to Washington, the Americans said point-blank that Tassoyev was a plant. Washington directed that they have nothing to do with him.

The American agents didn't, but the British Secret Service did! Tassoyev went to the British after the Americans shut the door in his face. The British took him at his word and flew him to England in Field Marshal Montgomery's own plane.

In London, the British lodged the colonel in a comfortable six-room apartment and set to work examining him. They even had one of their young woman operatives, a blonde named Betty Wiggin, on hand to help. To their dismay, as Washington heard the story, the colonel refused to answer any questions. Instead, he kept asking questions. He tried to probe into the operations of the Allied intelligence services. He wanted to know about the "Freedom Route" that other Russian defectors had followed.

When the British declined to oblige him, Colonel Tassoyev attempted a getaway. He broke out of the West Kensington apartment and ran to near-by Olympia Hall, London's exposition center. Bursting in on the crowds there, the colonel shouted that he had been kidnaped and demanded to be put in touch with the Soviet Embassy. A public scene was in the making, but an imperturbable London bobby, on duty in the hall, managed to squelch it. He calmly led the colonel back into custody.

Tassoyev was a plant, all right! By this time, the British were convinced of it too. But what to do with him—that was the problem. After talking it over with American intelligence men, they decided to send him back. It would teach the Russians, they felt, that the democracies could not be duped by their tricks. A few days later, Tassoyev was flown back to Germany and handed over to the Russians.

The American agents who spotted Tassoyev as a fraud belong to the Central Intelligence Agency, a hush-hush, cloak-and-dagger outfit that the United States Government recently established as a successor to the wartime Office of Strategic Services. It is the first permanent intelligence organization that this nation has ever had in peacetime. Despite the mistakes it has made, it is gradually building for itself a good reputation on both sides of the Atlantic and the Pacific. The fact that it showed up so well in the Tassoyev affair by comparison with the vaunted British Secret Service, for instance, was not lost on the White House, No. 10 Downing Street, or the Kremlin.

Only a year old, CIA already has a network of agents functioning all over Europe, Africa, South America, the Near and the Far East. It can be authoritatively stated that CIA men have penetrated everywhere behind the Iron Curtain. Twenty-four hours a day, dispatches from these operatives flow into the CIA's closely guarded offices on the seventh floor of the Federal Works Building in Washington, D.C. Behind grated windows, these messages are decoded, co-ordinated and weighed. Added one to the other, they are supplying top governmental leaders with an intimate *(Continued on Page 191)*

WIDE WORLD

When our supersleuths flopped. Bloody rioting in the streets of Bogotá, Colombia, marked the opening of the Pan-American Conference there last April. Our operatives' inexperience was blamed.

THEY FIGHT THE COLD WAR UNDER COVER

(Continued from Page 30)

picture of what is going on above and underground throughout the world.

On the basis of a probing investigation into CIA's record, the results of which were checked with a wide number of important Government officials, this writer can say:

Months in advance, CIA ascertained that the Russians were projecting a drive to oust the Western democracies from Berlin. As far back as last December, it provided Washington with details of the Russian plans for blockading the German capital by disrupting its rail, river and air transportation.

CIA obtained full facts on the activities of the 100,000 slave laborers mining uranium for the Russians in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

More than three months' notice was given the United States Government of the Russian communist plot to take over Czechoslovakia. The massing of Red troops on the Czech border was completely reported to Washington. After the debacle, CIA engineered the escape to the United States Zone of Germany of dozens of outstanding Czech democrats.

CIA agents turned up the proof that Russia was supplying arms and ammunition to its adherents in Italy and France.

Continuous inside information has been furnished Washington on future Arab moves in the Palestine situation.

On the other hand, the record also discloses that CIA has stumbled badly at times. It shows that:

CIA made a mess of its work in connection with the outbreak of violence that swept Bogotá, Colombia, during the Pan-American Conference there last April.

Efforts by CIA to learn and properly evaluate what other nations are doing in the field of atomic energy have been a fizzle.

CIA permitted subversives to penetrate its own staff. This occurred when it was given responsibility for the monitoring of foreign broadcasts, a job formerly held by the Federal Communications Commission. A number of fellow travelers, or worse, who had been working for the FCC were taken on the CIA pay roll too. It took months before CIA awakened to their presence and cleaned them out.

Experts like Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, the President's Chief of Staff, ascribe these bungles largely to CIA's youth and inexperience. They say that the organization has shown real improvement in recent months.

The Central Intelligence Agency is not the only Government agency in the foreign-intelligence field. The State Department's Foreign Service, the Office of Naval Intelligence, Army Intelligence and Air Force Intelligence also have their fingers in the pie. Each is authorized to collect any information "of interest to itself" that is available through "open channels," such as the press, radio and official government reports. However, under a formula laid down by the National Security Council, CIA is the pivotal group. It handles all undercover operations and, in addition, is charged with correlating all material gathered by the others.

Unfortunately, there is evidence of bitter jurisdictional rivalry and feuding among these various organizations. Overlapping functions and unnecessary duplication of work are widespread. And in the opinion of many Washington experts, these factors are seriously impeding the nation's intelligence program.

On the bright side of the ledger, though, is this: CIA has built up a staff of some thousands of people and is now striving diligently to give America eyes and ears in every country on earth. Its agents abroad are under strict orders to keep Washington posted on everything from a mayoralty election to the name of a prime minister's mistress and the extent of her influence over him.

Government officials familiar with CIA operations say that its men are closely scanning every facet of the economic life in the countries they're in. Key factories, railroad lines, oil refineries—all these are being ferreted out and reported back to Washington.

Not long ago, a high Air Force general wanted to see just how much progress CIA had made in this sphere. He arranged a confidential meeting with CIA chiefs. At this session, he asked the CIA people to assume that war with Country X was going to break out the following day. How much help, he inquired, could CIA give in the determination of bombing targets.

Inside of five minutes, complete details were handed him on the location, description and importance of every significant industrial target in Country X, several thousand in all. In many cases, photographs were shown him. The general was deeply impressed. He told me so.

By orders of the National Security Council, CIA men are sent into action whenever the Army, Navy or Air Force is unable to get data through open channels on the new weapons produced abroad. Right now, CIA agents are said to be working overtime to get specifications on certain foreign bombers, submarines and germ-warfare developments.

Though little is being said about it, CIA is known to be making wide use of the same spectacular techniques which OSS employed to rally resistance movements against Hitler. Both in front of and behind the Iron Curtain, CIA men are assisting democratic forces to resist Red excesses. Anticommunist political leaders, editors, labor-union chiefs, clergymen and others are getting CIA support in their struggles to retain or regain democracy. CIA men call this "building first columns."

In view of today's international tensions, the biggest assignment CIA has, of course, is the evaluation of other nations' intentions toward the United States. It is CIA's duty to tell the National Security Council if and when another country plans to start a war against America. The biggest test CIA has had to face in this line came during the "war crisis," last spring. It was a tough one.

A top-secret cable from Gen. Lucius D. Clay, United States Military Governor in Germany, set off the furor. It arrived at the Pentagon on a Friday morning shortly after the communists had seized control in Prague. Cabinet officials who read the cable quote Clay as saying, in effect, that he was ready to modify his long-standing belief that the Russians did not intend to start a shooting war soon. The man sitting on the hottest spot in the world, in other words, had shifted his position from "they won't" to "they might." Clay explained very carefully, however, that he had no new evidence to support his belief; he merely had a hunch and wanted Washington to know about it.

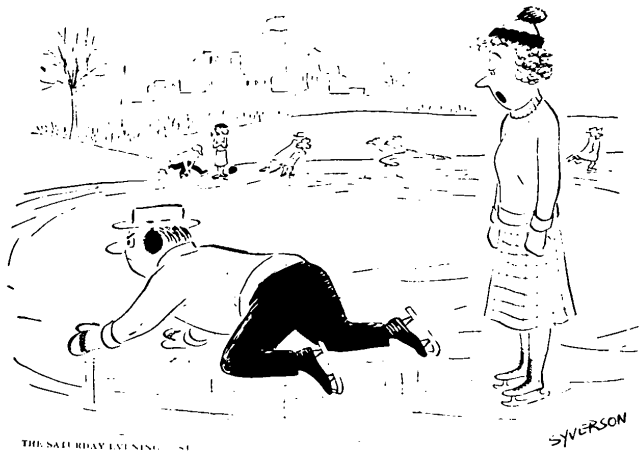
When a man as responsible as General Clay makes such a statement, Washington sits up and takes notice. The CIA was asked to check up—immediately.

For three days and three nights the CIA staff got no sleep as it got in touch with its agents in all parts of the world and assembled all the information on Russia at its disposal. It had its operatives check to see if any Red Army units had been shifted, if new supply dumps had been established, if European fifth columns had been alerted.

On the following Monday morning, CIA sent a note to President Truman, stating: "The Russians are definitely not going to start a war for the next sixty days, and in all probability not for a year."

The President's Cabinet accepted this estimate and tension eased in the capital.

The men and women overseas for CIA today are operating under a score and more of different covers. As a rule, they do no spying themselves. No one wants the men to crack safes or the women to vamp generals. The risks would be too great. The main job of these agents is to make contact with elements in each country who are willing to support the fight for democracy. This is not to say that CIA representatives don't also buy a good deal of information. They do. Most of the CIA agents are veterans of wartime intelli-



"Quitting, Matthew?"

gence. Each is required to speak and read the language of the country in which he is stationed. In fact, CIA insists that an agent must have traveled extensively in that area before it sends him there.

A top Government official who knows the organization inside out says that CIA has deliberately steered clear of gumshoe artists in selecting its agents. He says it much prefers "keen analysts, with imagination and a flair for winnowing the important matter out of a mass of confused detail."

Training men like that is a tricky business and a very secretive one, he declares. As he puts it, "A new CIA agent has to be taught the techniques peculiar to covert operations. He has to be briefed in the area he is going to from a clandestine intelligence point of view. He has to be tutored on personalities to know, use or avoid. A secure system of communications, with alternates, has to be devised for him and he has to learn how to use it." And, he states, this all has to be done in complete secrecy. At no time during his training can the new agent have any direct contact, or be in any way identified, with CIA.

CIA personnel are paid up to $9900 a year. The total amount of funds available to CIA, incidentally, is a carefully concealed secret. All that is known is that it runs into the tens of millions.

In spite of the missteps CIA has made, reports have it that even the British Secret Service has been favorably impressed by its early record. According to an unimpeachable authority, the British recently urged a virtual merger of both services. The British suggested that the two agencies split the world between them, with some areas assigned to CIA for coverage and others to the British. In particular, the British proposed that CIA handle all intelligence work for both nations in Rio de Janeiro, while it would handle everything in Cairo.

CIA refused. Under such an arrangement, it fears the United States might be left half-blind should war come and Great Britain be knocked out. In an uncertain world, the CIA men hold that America must have its own eyes everywhere, depending upon no one but its own organization to keep it informed. The closest liaison is maintained, however, between the top echelons of CIA and the British Secret Service.

How did CIA come into being? Traditionally, the United States has always ignored the value of intelligence. It had no real organization of any kind before the war, depending upon its military and naval attachés to pick up any scraps of information they could. Pearl Harbor disclosed the tragic results of this attitude. Nor was our military intelligence much improved during the war. While OSS sometimes performed Herculean feats, Army G-2 was frequently ineffective. The massing of German panzer divisions prior to the Battle of the Bulge was fully noted by OSS, but G-2 disregarded its reports. Hence the paralyzing surprise the Nazis were able to effect in the Ardennes. It was a lack of accurate intelligence on the Pacific war, Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, OSS head, says, that led President Roosevelt, at Yalta, to make such extensive concessions to Stalin. F.D.R. was informed by G-2, states Donovan, that the Japs had an additional army of 750,000 men in Manchuria. Anxious to offset this force, Roosevelt went all out to get the Russians in the Pacific war on our side.

"That report was untrue. The Japanese had no such army," General Donovan informed this writer. "It is tragic that poor intelligence so misled the President."

With the end of World War II, Donovan and others urged President Truman to take immediate steps to establish a permanent peacetime intelligence organization. Groundwork for such an outfit was even laid by the OSS. Before its various units around the world closed up shop, they drafted plans and made arrangements for such a group to take over. The OSS plans were largely discarded, however.

Luckily, a recommendation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a temporary intelligence setup was accepted by the President. On January 22, 1946, he established a National Intelligence Authority, consisting of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy, and the President's Chief of Staff. It was not until the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, though, that a permanent intelligence organization was set up by law. This was the CIA. It came into official being on September 26, 1947, as a separate agency reporting only to the National Security Council, a group composed of the President, the Secretaries of State, Defense, Army, Navy and Air, and the chairman of the National Security Resources Board.

The law specifically decrees that CIA "shall have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers or internal-security functions." Congress was taking no chances on propagating a Gestapo.

On the recommendation of Admiral Leahy, President Truman appointed Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter as CIA's first director. The post pays $14,000 a year. A snub-nosed man of fifty-one, with closely cropped dark hair, Admiral Hillenkoetter is a Missouri-born Annapolis graduate who has had a distinguished naval career. He was wounded aboard the battleship West Virginia while fighting off the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor. Later, he commanded the U.S.S. Dixie during the Solomon Islands campaign. He has spent many of his twenty-nine Navy years in intelligence, putting in three different stretches as a full or assistant naval attaché in Paris. It was he who set up Admiral Nimitz's intelligence network in the Pacific.

Hillenkoetter is married to the daughter of a Navy doctor. They have one ten-year-old little girl. His friends say that he spends twelve to fourteen hours a day at his desk, taking an afternoon hour off only once a month for a game of golf. He generally shoots about ninety-two. His chief recreation is the reading of history, and he is said to be an expert on the writings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, quoting at length from them to prove a point.

Admiral Leahy says that no man in the country has a better grasp of the mechanics of foreign intelligence than Hillenkoetter. He gives him personal credit for virtually all of CIA's accomplishments. However, other Government officials do criticize Hillenkoetter for certain missteps. They say that he badly erred in filling some forty of CIA's most important posts with Army and Navy personnel. They claim that this was unwise, on the ground that the services lend only their less able officers for duty with outside agencies. These same officials heatedly censure Hillenkoetter, for example, for placing one of his key branches under Brig. Gen. Edward L. Sibert, who, as intelligence chief for the 12th Army Group in Europe, was blamed for the Ardennes surprise. Hillenkoetter apparently saw some validity in these charges, because he recently had General Sibert transferred back to the Army.

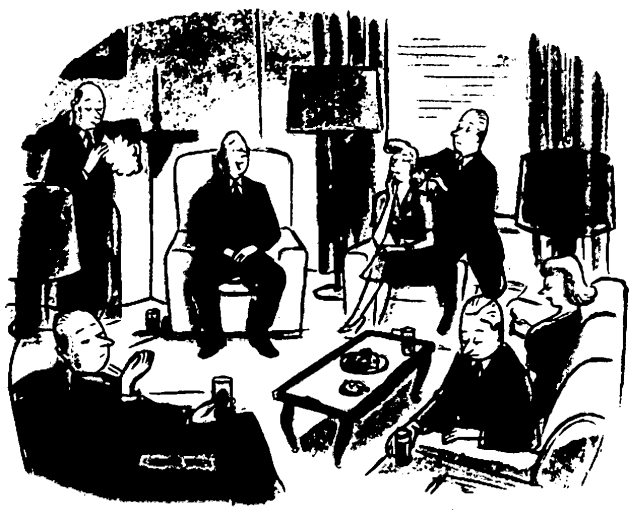
Over in the Pentagon, Hillenkoetter is particularly assailed for talking too freely before Congress on the rioting that punctuated the Bogotá Conference. He did this when asked to explain CIA's failure to warn Secretary of State George C. Marshall of the likelihood of broad-scale trouble during the Pan-American parley.

At an open hearing of a House committee, the admiral read a number of the actual messages CIA had received from its agents in Bogotá. They purported to outline communist plans to break up the conference.

"We did know of unrest in Colombia," he testified. "We did know that there was a possibility of violence and outbreaks aimed primarily at embarrassing the American delegation and its leaders, and this information was transmitted to officials of the State Department." He implied that General Marshall had disregarded the CIA warnings.

Nothing in Hillenkoetter's testimony, though, demonstrated any inkling on CIA's part that such widespread disorders were in the wind. Furthermore,

(Continued on Page 194)



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

"Heh-heh—er—that's the end of the joke . . ."

(Continued from Page 192)

the Pentagon believes that Hillenkoetter did CIA a great disservice in giving this evidence. He compromised his Colombian agents and their sources, it feels.

Actually, Hillenkoetter begged the congressmen not to make him testify in public. He was told, though, that if he refused to testify at an open hearing, he would be punished for contempt of Congress.

Even so, one prominent Defense Department official sternly commented, "He should have gone to jail first."

The Bogotá incident brought something else to light. It showed how squabbling between CIA and other Government agencies has critically impaired America's intelligence effort. Hillenkoetter's evidence disclosed that one vital CIA dispatch was withheld from the State Department because Willard L. Beaulac, United States Ambassador to Colombia, and Orion J. Libert, the department's advance representative in Bogotá, insisted upon it. The message said that "Communist-inspired agitators will attempt to humiliate the Secretary of State and other members of the U. S. delegation . . . by manifestations and possible personal molestation."

What happened was this: Under current regulations, CIA agents in foreign countries must submit all their dispatches to the ambassador or ranking diplomatic official present. They therefore read this message to Ambassador Beaulac before radioing it to CIA headquarters. Beaulac demanded that the dispatch be shown to Libert before it went to Washington. This was done. According to the CIA men, Libert stated that he did "not consider it advisable to notify the State Department of this situation." He was afraid it might unduly alarm the delegates.

Libert's stand put Admiral Hillenkoetter in a quandary. He got the report, all right. The ambassador could not prevent its transmission to CIA. But Hillenkoetter knew that if he forwarded it to Secretary of State George C. Marshall, Beaulac would learn of it and might make the CIA men's position in Colombia untenable. Reluctantly, he decided not to pass this message along.

Bogotá is not the only place where CIA has been tangling with State Department people and regulations. It is common knowledge in Washington that a similar situation prevails in Italy. The chief British Secret Service man in Rome is said to have more authority even than the British ambassador. In the American Embassy, however, the head CIA agent reportedly complains of being treated like an office boy.

There have also been differences between CIA and the Atomic Energy Commission. One cause for this has been CIA's inability to learn what progress Russia has made with the atomic bomb. The other big reason has been CIA's refusal—on the ground of security—to tell the AEC the sources for such atomic-energy information as it has been able to secure. The AEC maintains that it must know these sources if it is to evaluate the information with scientific accuracy. Recently, the situation was somewhat eased when CIA designated a reliable scientist as a liaison officer with the AEC. The AEC has agreed to accept his judgment as to the worth of CIA scientific reports. Relations between the two groups, however, are still far from amicable.

Evidence is also on hand that CIA and Army Intelligence do not get along. It is known that Army Intelligence took eleven months before it carried out orders to turn over all its undercover operations to CIA.

Washington is still talking about the catastrophic boner Army Intelligence pulled in connection with a clandestine project to take aerial photographs of Poland. In June, 1947, the Army ordered S/Sgt. James Hoagland, an Air Force photographer, to join the United States Military Mission in Warsaw for this purpose. He was to make use of the mission plane for his surreptitious photographing job. One set of Sergeant Hoagland's orders was sent by diplomatic pouch to Col. Thomas Betts, the head of the mission. Another set of these top-secret papers was sent through the ordinary mail in an envelope addressed simply to "The Commanding Officer, Warsaw, Poland." Quite naturally, the Polish authorities opened the envelope and read its contents. They permanently grounded the Military-Mission plane.

Another move that amazed Washington was a statement by Army Intelligence people in Germany giving details of the alleged manner in which they had spirited former Vice Premier Stanislaw Mikolajczyk out of Poland. Capital officials cannot understand why Army Intelligence bragged about such an ultraconfidential topic, especially since Army Intelligence, they say, had nothing whatsoever to do with Mikolajczyk's escape.

It is true, as Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, of the Army General Staff, pointed out to the writer, that "the caliber of American military attachés abroad has been vastly improved. We are no longer sending over teacup pushers with rich wives. Now we are using military experts who are thoroughly conversant with the people, the language and the conditions of the nations to which they are assigned."

But the Army has not been so careful in its choice of enlisted personnel for the offices of these military attachés. Last May, Army Intelligence was severely embarrassed when a Russian spy named Mrs. Galina Dunaeva Biconish was able to seduce twenty-one-year-old Sgt. James M. McMillin, decoding clerk in the Moscow Embassy. The sergeant fell wildly in love with this beautiful brunette and publicly renounced his American citizenship in favor of Russia.

Unlike CIA, where opportunities are being offered for a lifetime career in intelligence, the Army has almost always refused to let its officers specialize in intelligence work. It assigns men with little or no intelligence background to the various G-2 sections. Lt. Gen. Stephen J. Chamberlin, for example, who, until his transfer recently, was Director of Intelligence, Army General Staff, is an officer with G-3 (Plans and Operations) experience. So is Maj. Gen. A. R. Bolling, who was his deputy.

Gen. Omar N. Bradley, Army Chief of Staff, recently recognized this peculiar state of affairs and made a move that to Army men is 100 per cent revolutionary. He said to this writer, "I am recommending to the General Staff that the Army establish an intelligence corps in which personnel can specialize in intelligence just as artillery men concentrate on guns, and armored-corps men on tanks."

The Office of Naval Intelligence is already veering in this direction. It has instituted a separate section just for intelligence experts and other specialists. This will allow them to focus exclusively on their specialties without the old-time necessity for regular tours of sea duty. The stress that ONI is now placing on intelligence can be seen in its training program. Where the Army gives its military attachés and other intelligence men four months' schooling, the Navy puts its men through a fifteen months' course.

ONI men, by the way, are quick to deny responsibility for Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan's statement about the presence of "unidentified submarines" off the California coast. During congressional hearings on the draft, Sullivan got headlines by intimating that Russian submarines were reconnoitering American waters. He noted that similar reconnaissance by Nazi and Jap submarines prefaced Pearl Harbor.

A news report of the secretary's remarks was the first indication ONI had of the presence of those submarines. An immediate investigation was ordered. According to a Navy Department spokesman, ONI found that there was nothing to Mr. Sullivan's statement. No Russian submarine was then closer to the United States than 3000 miles.

The Air Force's intelligence service is reputedly doing a good job, although it is occasionally attacked for alleged wild-eyed exaggerations in its estimates of Russia's combat air strength. In as much as General Vandenberg, the Air Force commander, is an old intelligence man himself, Air Force Intelligence has been receiving consistent support in terms of funds and personnel.

At the State Department, it is said that Secretary Marshall has made several attempts to better its foreign-intelligence reporting. The same pattern is still followed, though, with all dispatches channeling through the various ambassadors and ministers. This, it is stated, has frequently resulted in only that information reaching Washington which has shown the particular envoy in a good light or which has reflected his personal political views.

Whether this be the reason or not, members of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee are bitter about the department's forecasts of the results in the last French municipal elections. The department told the committee that General DeGaulle's new party did not have a chance, that the communists would sweep the polls. Instead, the Reds were decisively trounced and the Gaullists won an outstanding victory.

The FBI has not been in the foreign-intelligence field since early in 1947, when it was directed to transfer its wartime Latin-American network to the Central Intelligence Group. It is now responsible solely for counterespionage activities within the United States and its possessions. There is antagonism between it and CIA.

Official Washington is aware of this feud and the other internecine strife in the intelligence family. In behalf of the National Security Council, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal has appointed a three-man board to look into it as part of a broad survey it is to make of all American intelligence operations. On the board are Allen W. Dulles, who headed the OSS mission to Switzerland, William H. Jackson, New York lawyer and wartime intelligence ace, and Mathias F. Correa, former United States attorney for the Southern District of New York.

While the full findings of this board will probably never be made public, it is expected to demand that the interagency squabbling stop and that all groups co-operate in the drive to give the United States the best possible eyes and ears around the world. The board is said to believe that a fair start has been made in this direction, but that much remains to be done if another Pearl Harbor is to be avoided.

THE END